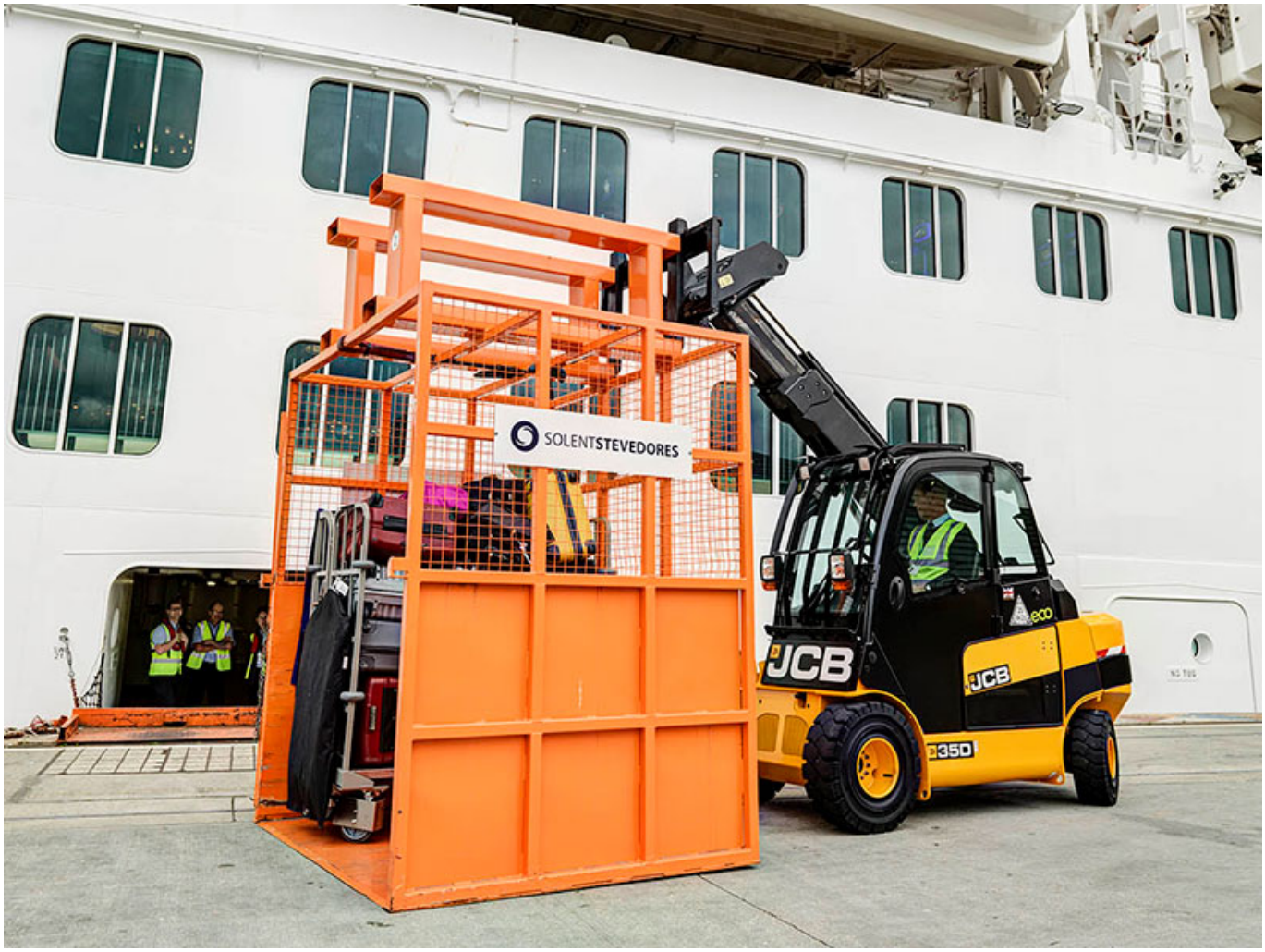

Solent Stevedores prepares for P&O's Iona

Solent Stevedores, an award-winning Stevedore and Terminal Operator based at the Port of Southampton, UK, is currently making preparations for the arrival of P&O's new flagship: M/V Iona. The much anticipated largest vessel ever to be purpose built for the UK market is set to arrive at the Port in May 2020 and commence 7 night itineraries sailing to the Norwegian Fjords.

The logistical challenges behind servicing a vessel of this size and scale are highly complex; an average turnaround day for Iona will see around 18,000 items of luggage handled and in the region of 500 pallets of fresh produce, technical and hotel stores being loaded. Handling this volume of cargo in such a narrow time window and in a confined space is never easy, and requires a highly skilled and choreographed workforce able to work across multiple parts of the ship and cruise terminal simultaneously.

It is an operation that has to be carefully and meticulously planned – preparations for Iona have been ongoing for nearly 2 years. The product of all of this is a considerable team effort between multiple stakeholders: Carnival UK, port owners Associated British Ports, and other terminal service providers such as security contractors, ground handlers and delivery companies – all working together to provide a seamless embarkation experience that the Port is world renowned for.

Solent Stevedores is a leading supplier of cruise stevedoring services to the industry, handling 700 turnaround calls annually across two main operating bases – the Port of Southampton, UK, and Marina Bay Cruise Centre in Singapore. In the Port of Southampton alone in 2020 we will provide stevedoring services to 421 vessels, handle nearly 3 million items of luggage, assist over 1.8 million passengers, and load approximately 120,000 tonnes of cargo to cruise vessels calling at the Port – cementing the company's position as a world leading service provider to the cruise industry.